

WARRIEWOOD

They're feeling good . . .



Human resources chief Linda Redfearn says employee engagement has been critical to Blackmores' success.

Picture: VIRGINIA YOUNG

Andrew Priestley

HAPPY WORKERS KEY TO STATE WIN

NORTHERN Beaches health products business Blackmores has been showered with accolades by the NSW Business Chamber, being named Employer of Choice and Business of the Year.

The business, which is based at Warriewood, took out the employer of choice awards for its range of employee-friendly

initiatives, including flexible work conditions, financial incentives and staff benefits such as beauty treatments.

The win in the Employer of Choice category made Blackmores a finalist in the chamber's Business of the Year category, which the company also won.

Blackmores human resources manager Linda Redfearn, said engagement among employees was a big factor in the company's awards success.

Blackmores CEO Christine Holgate also paid tribute to her employees for the company winning the award.

"You need to have passionate

people who are engaged emotionally in their work, and that's what we have at Blackmores," she said.

Business chamber CEO Stephen Cartwright described Blackmores as the "stand-out nominee" at the organisation's recent awards. "The company's commitment to people, product and passion is why it has been so successful in growing in Australia and overseas."

KIDS FIRST

School holiday programs for children

Bryn Kay

KIDS First Children's Services in Brookvale is offering youngsters a number of learning and health programs during the school holidays to prepare them for the forthcoming school year.

The programs cater for children aged 4-10 and parents will be eligible for rebates.

Director Sonja Walker said the health and therapy focus of the centre's health programs was in response to popular demand. "Lots of kids will be

POWER ON PLUS PROGRAM

When: January 23-25 (3-day workshop)
Cost: \$420 (eligibility for health fund rebate)
Details: Call Kids First Children's Services on 9938 5419.

out of their regular routines for up to two months.

"This long break can really affect their learning," Mrs Walker said.

Several programs will be run at during the holidays including reading workshops, speech pathology sessions and a

program for youngsters about to start school. For all programs during the holidays parents should call Kids First on 9938 5419 by 1pm, Friday.

Visit kids-first.com.au for more information. Alternatively people can call Kids First once it reopens on January 9.



Matthew Ackhurs tries the fitness program.



BOOKSHELF

Margaret Hutchings

I thought it would be interesting to look at our best selling books for the year because you might be able to pick up some ideas for Christmas. Our top three books were non fiction, which I believe is a first for us. 'The Hare with Amber Eyes' by Edmund de Waal was number 1, a brilliant book about de Waal's legacy from his great uncle leggie of 264 Japanese wood and ivory carvings, netsuke. De Waal decided to trace the history of his netsuke, back across the generations from Occupied Vienna to Tokyo. We also have in stock de Waal's 'The Pot Book', an accessible and informative A-Z guide to over 300 makers, schools and styles of ceramics from around the world.

Number 2 was Anh Do's 'The Happiest Refugee', his story of his family fleeing Vietnam in 1976 as a refugee, their boat journey, surviving pirate attacks, coming to Australia and their life since. You'll laugh, you'll cry, and you'll have a better idea of what being a refugee is all about.

Number 3 was Jamie Oliver's 'Jamie's 30 Minute Meals', a cookbook if you want meals prepared very quickly, and his new book, 'Jamie's Great Britain', his journey through Britain's food traditions, is also in stock.

Now we come to our first fiction book, and one we have all loved. In fact, at our Bookclub on Tuesday, one of the ladies mentioned just how glad she was to have read 'Past the Shallows' by Favel Parrett. This is one of those rare books which truly touches your heart, a story of a family in Tasmania: three boys and their father, an abalone fisherman who has become bitter and angry after the death of his wife. This year's favourite book for all of us here at Bookoccino.

Our next book on the bestseller list was Michael Robotham's 'Wreckage'. Michael's books just keep getting better and better, and we find that many people, after reading his new book, come back to read his backlist. Very few authors achieve this, and Michael does this easily.

We then have two of Susan Duncan's books - her new fiction 'Briny Cafe' and her beautiful book on Pittwater, 'A Life on Pittwater'. We'll finish this list with 'One Day' by David Nicholls, 'Caleb's Crossing' by Geraldine Brooks, 'Jasper Jones' by Craig Silvey, 'The Help' by Kathryn Stockett, 'The Language of Flowers' by Vanessa Diffenbaugh, and 'The Brain That Changes Itself' by Norman Doidge. It's an interesting collection of books, isn't it?

Now here's a few of my personal favourites. The cookbook I've enjoyed most this year is Madhur Jaffrey's 'Curry Easy'. I know, it's summer, but with this summer I'm still cooking from it. How can she make curries taste that good with so little effort! Jaffrey is truly a genius.

The book for teenagers I've most enjoyed is Moira Young's 'Blood Red Road', the story of Saba and her search for her stolen brother. Saba has a difficult time, including a period as a cage fighter, so the book is for 14+. But I can't wait for the next one in the series. For the slightly younger group, I loved 'The Emerald Atlas' by John Stephens. Three siblings have grown up in a series of orphanages and are finally placed in the eerily silent Cambridge Falls. They discover an old leather book, an ancient prophecy is invoked and the children will have to save the town. A great story. And for the early readers, Dick King-Smith has a lovely collection of five classic animal tales.

My favourite stories at the moment are Charles Frazier's 'Nightwoods', Jeffrey Eugenides' 'The Marriage Plot', Steve Hamilton's 'The Lock Artist', Anna Gavalda's charming 'Breaking Away' and David Guterson's 'Ed King'. We'd be delighted to help you if you need suggestions for your Christmas list - books are always the best present, even for someone who doesn't read too much. Some of the illustrated books in store are amazing. All of us here at Bookoccino wish you a very Happy Christmas and may the New Year be fabulous.

16/12



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